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THE NOTHING's L.M.S.A.

# happening

NOVEMBER 9, 1971

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## SENATOR'S CALL FOR CEGEP REFORM

Loyola's new student senators have already collectively prepared a motion to be presented at the first meeting of Senate. The motion calls for the formation of a sub-committee of the Curriculum Committee to consider a twenty-four page report on the future of the Loyola CEGEP division and communicate it's findings to Senate by the first week of January.

The report calls for "the initiation of a free elective system in Arts and Commerce, the implementation of a credit-credit with distinction grading system, and a thorough review of French education here at Loyola," says Barry Sheehy, LMSA Academic VP.

For an explanation of the reasons for this motion, see the stories on pages 2 and 3 of this publication.

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## TO FAIL OR NOT TO FAIL THAT IS THE QUESTION

By LIAM COX

A grade-evaluation is the last stamp in a STUDENT'S education process. How do you get there? Well, grades depend on exams, which depend on courses, which depend on classes which depend on the TEACHER in charge.

It's a whole system.

TEACHER — CLASS — COURSE — EXAM —  
— GRADE — ??

STUDENTS, a huge body with common interests, come to college. Then..... TEACHERS and ADMINISTRATORS divide the STUDENT BODY into faculties, divide them into departments, divide them into courses, divide them into sections, divide them into individuals who fight (compete) against each other for the TEACHER'S marks on TEACHER'S TERMS.

COMMON		INDIVIDUAL
BODY OF	FACULTY	DEPARTMENT
SECTION		COURSE
STUDENTS		STUDENTS
IN LARGE		COMPETING
MASS		AGAINST EACH
		OTHER FOR MARKS
		OF TEACHER'S
		APPROVAL

In this system, who produces the work? STUDENTS of course. If they don't work, there's isn't any education, so there isn't any point in having a college.

Who controls the work? TEACHERS of course. Their job is to see that STUDENTS produce work which is satisfactory to TEACHERS. Who oversees the whole corporation? THE ADMINISTRATION. They decide how and when TEACHERS are to control STUDENTS' work.

## COMPULSORIES, WHO NEEDS THEM

"Defenders of the present level of compulsory courses are more interested in maintaining the strength of their departments than in the welfare of the students."

Excerpt from motion presented to Senate curriculum committee by the LMSA Education Dept. calling for elimination of required courses.

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Who is in the best position to judge the real value of the work? Again, STUDENTS -- they produce it, they know what it's worth to them. TEACHERS can never know the value to STUDENTS of work produced, because they didn't produce it. TEACHERS look on from the outside and say how it appears to them, as outsiders.

### WHO NEEDS GRADES?

TEACHERS and ADMINISTRATORS and EMPLOYERS. STUDENTS should already know what the work product is worth.

### WHO NEEDS EVALUATION?

EVERYBODY. We all need ways to judge the worth of our ideas, our actions, our relationships, our lives.

### BUT, BUT, BUT

Grades are not evaluation. They are a code system to represent at a glance the vey long, complicated process of evaluation which is mainly internal and subjective.

### WHAT KIND OF GRADING -- CODE SYSTEM HELPS STUDENTS MOST?

Number systems are based on failure -- 75 percent PASS equals 25 percent FAIL. Letter systems are based on failure -- B equals FAILED TO GET AN A. Pass-Fail systems institutionalise the concept of FAILURE even more. CREDIT SYSTEM means a STUDENT takes a course. If he/she fulfills the requirements for the course, then CREDIT is given. No marks, no letters, NO FAIL.

STUDENTS need X number of credits. Why not record student successes, not failures?

### LAST THOUGHT

If number percentages are not based on FAILURE, then why isn't the pass mark 100 percent. Anything less equals so much FAILURE. Have you ever heard of a student who fully completes all requirements who is allowed complete SUCCESS? Who is allowed 100 percent SUCCESS?





**"Compulsories serve to protect, and in fact breed, poor teaching and poor classes" says Barry Sheehy Educational Vice President LMSA**

Educational Vice-President Barry Sheehy recently announced that the Loyola of Montreal Students Association Education Department will be coming forward with a well-documented motion calling for the elimination of faculty-wide compulsories at the collegial level. We have therefore decided to print some small segments of the motions supporting arguments.

- "It is therefore important that we make it clear that we are not contesting the issue of broad-based education for CEGEP. What we are attempting to do however is to point out the inconsistency of the present system of compulsories with that concept. With proper counselling, students can be made to see the merits of sampling a large variety of subjects and at the same time establish a programme specifically suited to the students' interest and abilities.

"The whole attitude and outlook of a class changes when those students in it are there because they want to be. Only in having students that are interested and motivated can we ever hope to attain the stated aim of the CEGEP programme, which is broad-based education.

- "At the same time we would be building a truly distinctive character for Loyola which would be based on our interest in the student as an individual rather than our past pre-occupation with rigidly structured courses overburdened with requirements.

- "We envisage this new student-oriented approach as having deeper ramifications than mere superficial change. With proper counselling, a credit system of marking which will de-emphasize marks and eliminate the spectre of failure we predict that the vast majority of students will opt for a wide variety of subjects. In this way we will have accomplished our aim of broad-based education while at the same time adhering to the belief that students must be motivated in order to learn."

"It is not the role of the college to facilitate stagnation in departments and to protect poor teaching with the use of compulsory courses. The fact of the matter is that we are failing miserably in our responsibility to produce students that claim to have a working knowledge of the French language. It is our firm belief that French education need not be as futile and frustrating an experience as it is at present if the following criteria can be fulfilled:

1) Students can be motivated into willingly partaking in courses, which would involve elimination of compulsory courses and the initiation of an academic counselling service:

11) New more effective methods of teaching can be employed in the classroom."

- "No other university or college in Quebec reviewed in

this survey restricts the students in such a manner. Comparing out-of-province institutions, the year prior to university and university one were placed as equivalents to the two-year collegial programme. Again, without exception, no institution was found which imposed such restrictions."

- "This new philosophy would be based on the principle that students are capable of taking an active part in the formulating of their own education ...we would furthermore like it known that it incorporates the premise that motivation is the single greatest asset to the learning process."

Based on the premise that students today are more than capable (especially with the assistance of an academic counselling service) of selecting their own individual programme of course studies at CEGEP level, be it resolved that in the faculties of Arts and Commerce a system of free electives be introduced allowing a student to take any ten courses for his collegial diploma.

A) That a special academic counselling service be established under the Director of Collegial Studies where all students can receive advice in establishing their own personal programme of study prior to selecting his-her courses.

B) That a special subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee be established to carry out a comprehensive review of French education at Loyola.

## THE ALBATROSS REMOVED

### "Theology Professor's Views On Compulsories"

From: Professor Arthur Webster  
Theological Studies

It may be only a straw in the wind but it is remarkable that Time this week is reporting on the boom in the religious studies - "now the fastest-growing graduate field at secular universities." I find that students are now heading into theological studies here at Loyola talking of reinventing life, questioning how we should participate in the universe, how we should participate with others NOW. These same students carry with them also sentiments of insecurity and perplexity. But they are heading in here no longer because they must - they're coming in to theological studies to search around for inspiration for some really great creative work.

Student indifference, if not contempt, which undermined the presentation of the questions theology must ask today, was a consequence of compulsory theology. Students and the profs in this academic discipline left aside these mutual handicaps imposed by that well-intentioned but clumsy system when most timely Senate action in 1970 abandoned the theology requirements at Loyola. In 1971 it is for me as if a burden has fallen from our shoulders in theological studies. I'm glad to feel this new atmosphere of freedom about us. I hope what is happening in theological studies is a warning against the tyranny of academic conventions.

## THE PASS/FAIL SAGA

By BARRY SHEEHY

Having been involved in the struggle for a new grading system from its very conception in the CEGEP English Dept. last year, I cannot help but look back in utter disbelief at the outcome of the whole affair. The so called



compromise that has been arrived at after exhaustive months of negotiations would, to anyone acquainted with the original efforts, appear unrecognizable. One can perhaps write this off as the inevitable result of having to go through the process of endless faculty and administration-dominated committees but what we cannot write off nor forgive is the blatantly obstructionist policy adopted by some (as opposed to all) administrators. They have purposely attempted to confuse the whole issue in a fog of innuendoes about the possible detrimental result to students of a new grading system. To get a clearer picture of what I am referring to, let us examine the order of events that have taken place since last year.

When the new grading system was first introduced and endorsed by both the Arts Council and the English Dept. the senate was faced with a concrete proposal backed by two very influential and powerful bodies. It was obvious that to those who opposed the new system, they had been thought to a standstill in debate on the issue. The obvious question for them therefore was how to get around the issue without appearing arbitrarily put down on the motion. The solution arrived at was really quite brilliant. The Senate, all of a sudden, became extremely interested in democracy and obtaining student opinions on the subject.

For what was probably the first time in the history of the Senate, they decided to ask the students if they wanted reform. The logic behind the strategy was obviously based on the hope that when it comes to their academic future, most students are instinctively conservative and therefore would oppose the new grading system. However, things did not work out according to expectations for the students voted en masse in favor of change with the largest segment (58 percent) backing a credit system. Immediately the Senate reversed its stand on the issue. They now stated that they had only agreed to "consider the student opinions when making their decisions".

It goes without saying that we were unable to push the credit system through Senate or its academic standing committee and we ended with the pass-fail compromise. It is also interesting to note that in spite of our objections, marks are still kept in the deep recesses of the Registrar's computer which effectively eliminates the real significance of the reform.

Up to this point I was disappointed but still felt that the new pass-fail system was a good measure if it was viewed as a transitional measure that would eventually lead us to a comprehensive credit-non-credit system. It was however dependent on the kind of response we received from the student body when it came to actually taking a course in pass-fail.

At this point the administration (you can throw in a few faculty as well) decided to abandon their rear guard action which had been so devastatingly effective and adopted a new strategy. This new policy was one of systematic "scare tactics". A series of public meetings were held at which students were purposely lead to believe that adopting pass-fail was most assuredly a one way ticket to skid row. To hear some administrators, pass-fail courses would appear to amount to nothing less than academic suicide. Some administrators even went so far as to figure out ways to circumvent the clause in the Senate legislation which prohibits any discrimination against students opting for a pass-fail course. At first, we tried to offset this negative onslaught by pointing out the many advantages of the non- numerical grading system. This effort, however, proved to be futile in the face of the administrations' determined offensive.

To top things off, the Happening (Loyola's equivalent to TASS) in their latest edition printed an article on pass-fail. An excerpt from this offers a prime example of subtle scare tactics.

"Because no mark on a grade is given, there is always a possibility that pass-fail could prevent a student from gaining entrance to another university ... Most human beings like to know where they stand, and under a pass-fail system you only know in a general way. In addition most people receive a great deal of satisfaction in knowing they have done a job well and marks and grades provide this."

In the light of such remarks, the average student will not touch the new grading system with a ten foot pole. Can you blame him-her?

Where we go from here is difficult to say but one thing is sure; the first senator who comes up to me and claims that the poor response by students to pass-fail is proof that they are not interested in a new grading system will soon after be filing an assault and battery charge.



## Loyola CEGEP means increased freedom-right?

I'm a man now! My mother told me so just the other day when she drove me to my first class. "You're a young adult when you take that gargantuan leap from the closely guarded adolescent days of high school to the mind blowing liberation of college," she said.

The effects of liberalized movements and thoughts are clear; now you can skip classes, play cards, do just about anything! Students no longer have to pass, (for in college, life is different from high school) failure is encouraged. Why, they give you so much freedom that you don't know what to do with your spare time.

Of course, all the responsibilities that come with such freedom have to be accepted or they just blow your mind. This realization is important to everyone, that's why they beat it into your brain (or cerebrum as I learnt in chemistry).

In college, if you take a course, there is always a possibility you can fail, but it's always comforting to know that there are administrators and faculty just waiting to kick you in your liberated arse back to the same course for another one hundred bucks.

Although I'm only a college FETUS having been here only one month, I think I have the testicles to make it.

To sum it up, there's lots more restricting responsibilities but lots more freedom to restrict.

Davey Long Gone





## The Question is.....

By GORDON CLARK

Certainly, if the questioning process (What kind of faith could.... keep men and women leaping generation after generation into the swirling darkness of uncertainty....) 1 (Wow!) is good for an individual in his day-to-day life at college, that process is just as good for the institution. Even better, for here we have one entity affecting a great many lives, almost ten thousand, in fact.

So what are the questions that Loyola is asking - or should be asking? And, more to the point, just who and how many are called upon to answer them?

How about the quality of education here? What is it like? Are the students really taking part in some form of significant learning? Or are they asleep, merely putting in time until Convocation Day? And if they are not asleep, what do they think about being trained for jobs that will be increasingly hard to find when they graduate? And what about those that just do not care - WHY DON'T THEY CARE?

Well, shall we try a few answers? To begin with, not enough students care to be on such things as curriculum committees because of the mistreatment they have received in the past. The way their views and ideas (like a credit system of grading) were shoved aside and ignored. What a sad waste of their talent and enthusiasm!

And secondly, the students who continue to care by some miracle, find themselves being rather hastily outvoted time after time, owing to the inadequate student representation on virtually every academic body at Loyola. Clearly then, the problem is in the small degree of student participation found everywhere from the classroom to Senate.

But we must not let ourselves be discouraged. Now is exactly the wrong time to give up. The pendulum is swinging back. The low point in the cycle of student interest and activity at Loyola has been reached and left behind.

With the influx of large numbers into our CEGEP programme - students who have somehow survived the deadening and narrow process of high school education are demanding a major role in the shaping and improving (oh the improving!) of their own education here at Loyola. They will not continue any longer to be led like sheep in this, the next phase in their education.

So let us challenge the institution and its two other main groups, namely faculty and administration here and now, to open the doors and give control to students in all areas of academic concern. Not to do this is to run from the central challenge of higher education in the Seventies.

The REAL QUESTION is - will the challenge be accepted?

1 - P.G. Malone - The 'Happening'  
Oct. 5

## Nothing's Happening WHAT IS EDUCATION?

"I have long been of opinion that the great Desideratum in Education, is not so much the quantum of Knowledge which the pupil may acquire, as the spirit which may have been excited.

"Thus, if you put a Traveler into the right Road, and give him directions in which way he may best prosecute his journey, his progress must then depend in a great measure on his own resolution and activity.

"So it is with Knowledge. If the Student be put upon the right Track of Investigation, if the Faculties be gradually expanded, and the Curiosity roused, the natural impulse of the human mind, except it be checked by Indolence or Timidity, is to go forward; and the Scholar may make almost what proficiency he pleases."

From:  
Address to the Graduating Class,  
February 21, 1828  
Rev. James Somerville  
Principal, College of New Brunswick

"IT'S NOT WHAT YOU'RE TAUGHT THAT DOES THE HARM BUT HOW YOU'RE TAUGHT."

In fact for most of your school life, it doesn't make that much difference what subject you're taught. The medium in school truly is the message. And the medium is above all coercive. You're forced to attend. The subjects are required. You have

to do your homework. You must observe school rules. And throughout you're bullied into docility and submissiveness. Even modern liberal refinements don't really help. So you're called an underachiever instead of a dummy. So they send you to a counselor instead of beating you. It's still not your choice to be there. They may pad the handcuffs--but the handcuffs stay on.

Which particular subject they teach is far less important than the fact it is required. We don't learn that much subject matter in school anyway in proportion to the huge part of our lives that we spend there. But what we do learn very well, thanks to the method, is to accept choices that have been made for us.

From:  
Student as nigger  
Jerry Farber

## Nothing's Happening

Nov. 8, 1971

"Nothing's Happening" was born as a result of an obvious Communications gap between the Loyola student community and their government. We felt this gap was especially acute in the area of academics. After consultation with the Education Department of the L.M.S.A., we have attempted to bring forward in this publication some of the major academic issues facing this community. You owe it to yourself to read it.

Peter Fedele  
Communication's V.P.  
L.M.S.A.

Nothing's Happening  
is a joint publication of the  
L.M.S.A. communications and  
education departments. Coordinator  
Paul Willcocks.



So you just finished paying off your tuition too - eh?